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24 JUNE 1977

## WASHINGTON POST

# A Spooky Milestone In Senate

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It was a historic first and Sen. Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii) didn't want the moment to pass unremarked.

As chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, Inouye was presenting the Senate with its first opportunity to vote on a separate bill authorizing the budget for the intelligence community.

The bill, Inouye said, "marks an important milestone."

But the manner of its presentation on the Senate floor and passage between 7 and 8 p.m. Wednesday hardly befitted either a milestone or a landmark.

About 12 senators were present, and all but a handful were members of the intelligence committee. Several absentees complained yesterday that they were not informed the bill was about to come to the floor.

The bill's handling late in the Senate's day with only slightly more than an hour's notice even to the committee staff that it would be called up left some observers with the impression that, despite his talk of a milestone, Inouye and the Senate leadership were not unhappy to see the bill approved as quietly as possible.

The House Appropriations Committee, in a separate action earlier this week, voted to give Congress control over the Central Intelligence Agency's budget account called the Reserve for Contingencies, which has been largely built up to its present \$35 million

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total without congressional involvement.

The Senate's attitude toward the authorization bill, which was approved without a roll-call vote and without amendments, also reflected the trust senators have developed for Inouye's committee and the apparent lack of interest among non-committee members in monitoring the intelligence community.

On May 17, Inouye wrote to his colleagues inviting them to read the classified committee report giving details of the authorization bill. Three senators availed themselves of the opportunity.

They and the 17 committee members are the only senators who know what the authorization bill contains. The dollar figures for intelligence operations and descriptions of programs cut back or eliminated by the committee are contained in the classified report.

Sen. William D. Hathaway (D-Maine) told the Senate that his subcommittee on budget authorization held more than 45 hours of hearings "involving over 500 questions for the record and 1,300 pages of testimony." In addition, he said, 2,000 pages of "program justification material" was obtained from the executive branch.

Hathaway said the authorization for fiscal 1978 provides "sufficient resources to reverse the trend of the past several years, which has seen the impact of inflation erode the purchasing power of intelligence."

The committee reduced the amount requested, Hathaway said, but he did not give details. The Director of Central Intelligence, Adm. Stansfield Turner, said yesterday the reductions did not cause him serious problems.

Sen. Gary Hart (D-Colo.) said that because this was the first year the committee reviewed the intelligence budget the senators moved with "care and deliberation."

The process convinced Hart that budget authorization "will become one of the . . . most valuable tools" for watching over the intelligence community.

Sens. Birch Bayh (D-Ind.) and Frank Church (D-Idaho) urged the Senate to adopt a separate recommendation of the intelligence committee to make public the total cost of U.S. intelligence operations. That issue will be taken up in a secret Senate session, probably before July 4, a Senate source said yesterday.

Senate approval of the authorization bill apparently came after the bill had been taken to conference with the House.

Inouye said earlier this month that

since the House had not yet formed a counterpart to his committee, Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John C. Stennis (D-Miss.) would take the bill up in conference along with the defense military procurement authorization bill. That conference ended Monday.

The House Appropriations Committee action limiting the CIA contingency fund came in secret session Tuesday at the instigation of Rep. Bill D. Burlison (D-Mo.)

Burlison said yesterday that he offered an amendment to eliminate the Reserve for Contingencies because "anything the executive branch decides to do can be done with these funds."

About three-quarters of the present \$35 million fund has come from monies unspent on other projects or not needed during a year but placed in the fund rather than returned to the

Treasury, Burlison said. The other quarter was appropriated for the fund.

Burlison's amendment was defeated, but Chairman George H. Mahon (D-Tex.) introduced an amendment Burlison had announced would be his fall-back position, Burlison said.

The amendment prohibits the transfer of leftover funds into the Reserve for Contingencies.

The effect is to leave \$35 million in the fund, but in combination with another new section of the defense appropriations bill which requires that CIA funds be appropriated on the same regular basis that applies to other agencies, the CIA would have to come to Congress for an appropriation to replenish the fund.

Full House and Senate approval are needed before these new restrictions on the CIA budget would become law.

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